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## "Last Shot for Freedom"

Version: Production Script

Written by Arman Borghem

### CAST

Serena Vince and The Wife	LAURA POST
The Technician	PHILIP BENFALL
Mark	DELON EUBENA
The Announcer	MARK BRUZEE
Carl Strad	COLIN SNOW
Robert Hudson	BRANDON COLE
John Kempfer, Badger 2 and Interviewed Soldiers	ELIE HIRCHMAN
James Spencer and The Husband	CHRIS SNYDER
Commander Russell	DAN GORGONE
Interviewing Reporter and Commercial Announcer	BYRON LEE

Produced by Paul Mannering

Co-Produced by Mark Bruzee

Post-Production and Sound Design by Chris Snyder

Executive Producer for Darker Projects is Eric Busby

BEGIN SCENE 1

FADE IN.

MAJOR VINCE

(Introductory Monologue)

They say that The Realist lives in a world of fear and terror, and that The Ignorant is unchained from those burdens. This is not true. The Ignorant lives in the exact same universe as The Realist, with all the same horrors and apprehensions. But he or she has merely chosen to ignore the truth, chosen to disregard the obvious. That is a puny universe to live in; by any objective definition worse than any reality could ever become.

INT - ENA WEATHER COMPUTER ROOM - MIDNIGHT

SFX An electronics device is switched on

SFX Rapid gunfire, both close and sporadic in the distance NB: the following segment is played during the dialog in a low volume starting when the device is switched on

MAJOR VINCE (FILTERED)

(On TV screen )

Lay down suppressive fire!

SFX A grenade explodes

SFX More gunfire (distinct from the first)

MAJOR VINCE (CONT'D)

Oorah!!

SFX More gunfire. Alien gets hit, last dying sounds of agony

TERRY

And this will be broadcast tomorrow?

MARK

Tomorrow at noon, yes.

<a beat as they watch and we listen>

TERRY

Excellent. You've done it again, Mark. It's perfect.

END SCENE 1

BEGIN SCENE 2

INT - ENA STUDIO - MIDDAY

FEMALE TECHNICIAN  
(counting seconds)  
Five... four... three...

<A beat lasting two seconds before we hear...>

MUSIC A jingle for a news broadcast

ENA ANNOUNCER VOICE  
(movie trailer voice)  
Bringing you the latest news as they develop... this is  
ENA World.

CARL STRAD  
Good afternoon. I'm Carl Strad and this is the European  
News Agency, April 21st 2210.<beat> And now Robert  
Hudson with the latest news from the war on Cerna two.

ROBERT HUDSON  
Thank you, Carl. Today, another important battle was  
fought when the 1st army under the command of major  
Serena Vince successfully defeated a Cernian battle  
group in a skirmish close to one of their war machine  
factories. Our roughly thousand man strong force swept  
away the resistance with speed and vigor, and left  
nothing of the horror factory but smoking ashes. The  
combat camera, always with major Vince, was able to  
catch the entire battle from the major's perspective,  
and the footage was received unedited only a few hours  
ago. As always, we would like to warn our sensitive  
viewers of the possibility of graphic violence.

SFX Gunfire in the distance

SFX: Two heavy shots of shotgun fire

MAJOR VINCE  
(On Video)  
Attack! Go! Go! Go!

SFX As MAJOR VINCE runs, we hear artillery shells explode around her,  
she fires a couple of bursts with her rifle

<NB: we are now back to the clip in the beginning>

SFX Rapid gunfire, both close and sporadic in the distance

MAJOR VINCE (CONT'D)  
(On Video)  
Lay down suppressive fire!

SFX: A grenade explodes More gunfire (distinct from the first)

MAJOR VINCE (CONT'D)  
Oorah!!

SFX: More gunfire Alien gets hit, last dying sounds of agony

ROBERT HUDSON  
(Upbeat)  
Despite the decision to put the expected follow-up expedition on hold, things seem to be running surprisingly smoothly. This crippling blow to the Cernians is expected to severely hamper their supply of armored vehicles, but despite today's victory it may take long until we see the end of it all. Let's hope not. <beat> John, the weather?

JOHN KEMPFER  
Certainly Rob, thank you for that. Tomorrow's harsh winds are expected to bring in severe rain clouds <fade out> that will sweep in over the...

END SCENE 2

INT - THE STUDIO AFTER THE BROADCAST, SOME PEOPLE IN THE BACKGROUND BUSY TALKING OR JUST WALKING THROUGH THE ROOM. - MIDDAY

SCENE 3

The studio after the broadcast, some people in the background busy talking or just walking through the room.

JAMES SPENCER  
Robert, can I talk to you for a moment?

ROBERT HUDSON  
Sure, boss. What is it?

JAMES SPENCER

Well, it's just a small thing, really. In the future, could you refrain from making... comments on the war that are not in your papers - specifically, predictions? (a beat) Indicating that it's going to go on for a long time isn't really what most people want to hear.

ROBERT HUDSON

(short laugh)

Ah, come on, James! You think they'd take offense? The war's been going on for months now, it's not like anyone's expecting it to be over tomorrow.

JAMES SPENCER

I'm just saying, Robert. I hope we don't have a problem.

ROBERT HUDSON

(hesitates)

No... of course not. I'll... I'll think of that until next time.

JAMES SPENCER

Good.

SFX: Steps as SPENCER leaves

SFX: Steps as CARL and JOHN get closer

CARL STRAD

What was that all about Robert?

ROBERT HUDSON

Nothing.

JOHN KEMPFER

Are you sure?

ROBERT HUDSON

Yeah. Let's go have some lunch.

END SCENE 3

INT - ENA STUDIOS CAFETERIA - MIDDAY

SCENE 4

Canteen. Crowded with people, mostly journalists, having lunch.

SFX: Spoon picking in bowl of soup

CARL STRAD  
(Not Happy)  
Chicken soup. I don't even like chicken. Guess I'll just have to slurp the water and eat the vegetables.

ROBERT HUDSON  
How can someone not like chicken? I mean, we've all been brought up on it. Everything supposedly tastes like it, and you're saying you can't eat it?

CARL STRAD  
(Chuckles)  
Yeah, I guess that's what I'm saying. I'm just tired of it, you know. Of everything tasting the same, I mean. Tired of everything being so damn chicken.

SFX: Spoons in soup are heard. Slurps.

JOHN KEMPFER  
I wonder what they're eating on Cerna two.

CARL STRAD  
Whatever it is, I bet it ain't chicken.

END SCENE 4

EXT - CERNA II - DAY

SCENE 5

Cerna II. On this planet, a mild breeze is always blowing. We're at the Terran army's camp, inside major Vince's tent. We can faintly hear the canvas flap.

SFX: A short 'blip' as a recorder is turned on.

MAJOR VINCE

Major Serena Vince, personal journal, (cynically) right before nightfall as usual. (sigh) Today marked the pass of two months since we first arrived on Cerna II. And in the last five weeks I have had nothing but casualties, disastrous attempts at diplomacy, and the constant reminder that not a single Cernian soldier has been captured for questioning ever since first contact went nuts. I'm sorry to say that we only have two hundred and twenty-seven men and women left, having since long passed what anyone would consider an acceptable loss limit. As we continue to use this canyon as our base camp, enemy activity is still continuing in the general area, and there is continuous artillery shelling during the night. Damn, I hate being stuck in this godforsaken place. The soldiers are getting tired too. I know the wait is hard, but as soon as the scouting teams have found their way back to the comm center, we'll all be on the move. We will all be on the move, and we will retake the comm center and we will send a message back home. And when reinforcements arrive, the Cernians are going to be eating out of our palms by the end of the year.

SFX: A short 'blip' (different from the first) as the recorder is turned off.

SFX: A 'blip-blip' of a comms unit

MAJOR VINCE (CONT'D)

Talk to me Commander Russell

COMMANDER RUSSELL

(SFX through a radio, light interference)

Badger Two has broken radio silence, they're requesting to speak with you.

MAJOR VINCE

(excited)

What?! Put them through.

PRIVATE FERRIS

(SFX through a radio, very heavy interference)

Sir! This is Badger Two. We have visual contact with the Mushroom, five clicks away. Enemy patrols. Requesting instructions.

MAJOR VINCE  
(trying to speak as clearly as possible)  
Does the building look intact?

PRIVATE FERRIS (FILTERED)  
Affirmative. We believe so, sir.

MAJOR VINCE  
Can you stay reasonably put at your current position  
without being detected by patrols?

PRIVATE FERRIS  
We believe so, sir.

MAJOR VINCE  
If given one day-and-night cycle, could you study enemy  
patrols in order to find a pattern?

PRIVATE FERRIS  
We, uh, we believe so, sir.

MAJOR VINCE  
Then you will break radio silence again at that time and  
report your analysis to me.

PRIVATE FERRIS  
Understood, sir.

MAJOR VINCE  
Hang in there, we'll see each other soon. Major Vince  
out.

PRIVATE FERRIS  
Badger Two signing off.

SFX": A 'blip', then another 'blip'.

COMMANDER RUSSELL  
(SFX through a radio, light interference)  
Russell here. Have they found it, major?

MAJOR VINCE  
Indeed they have. Get Badger One and Badger Three back  
here A-SAP. I really think this is it, commander. If  
everything goes as planned, we'll be leaving in a day or  
two. So get some sleep... we have a hard journey ahead of  
us.



COMMANDER RUSSELL  
Will do, major. No worries.

SFX: One of those famous signing off 'blips'.

MAJOR VINCE  
(yawns)

SFX She picks a toothbrush out of a glass, sound as she pulls down the tent zipper and flaps open the canvas, wind is heard more strongly. She brushes her teeth for about ten seconds, then spits.

MAJOR VINCE (CONT'D)  
(sigh) Every time I watch this miserable excuse for a sunset I'm reminded more of how much I miss Earth.

SFX She pulls up the zipper (lower wind volume). We then hear her lay down on a mattress and cover herself with a quilt. Heavy artillery starts to pound in the far, far distance. There are a few different batteries firing, and together they form a rhythm that is steady and that continues. She turns over on the mattress.

MAJOR VINCE (CONT'D)  
(sleepily)  
Why do they do that to the planet every night? What did the planet do to them?

SFX: She turns around again, artillery continues its rhythm, almost like a distant drum concert.

MAJOR VINCE (CONT'D)  
Must have been some horrible crime.

SFX: She turns once more. And once more. Artillery continues.

MAJOR VINCE (CONT'D)  
(deep sigh)

SFX Artillery continues.

FADE OUT

END SCENE 5  
BEGIN SCENE 6

INT - ENA STUDIO OFFICES - MORNING

SFX: Office sounds. Phones, keyboards quiet voices.

ROBERT HUDSON  
(breathing slightly with exertion)  
What's up?

CARL STRAD  
You're late.

SFX: Some sounds of typing as Robert logs onto his computer (ideally, a username and password followed by a more distinct 'enter'-tap. This can overlap dialog. No other sounds from the computer other than typing.

ROBERT HUDSON  
Yeah, I know. Terrible traffic.

SFX: Carl puts his feet up on the table.

CARL STRAD  
You want news? I'll tell you something that's not going to be on the news. <beat> Apparently, the SAU have been bitching about the yanks interfering with some air traffic control lidar contract in Brazil. They say they uncovered signs of industrial espionage conducted by the US through ECHELON, and now they're getting European quantum cryptography in order to protect themselves.

ROBERT HUDSON  
Haven't we been using that for ages?

CARL STRAD  
Sure we have. Water proof, constantly been kept up to date. Costs us a fortune, though, so we've kept it to ourselves.

ROBERT HUDSON  
But now we're selling it to the South American Union?

CARL STRAD  
We're GIVING it to them. They couldn't afford it anyway.

ROBERT HUDSON  
Let me guess. A European company just got outbid by an American company?

CARL STRAD

Something like that. Not that we'd have the guts to say it out loud to the world of course. <sarcastic> Nooo, that could damage our weapons exports. <beat> You know something else that isn't going to be on the news?

ROBERT HUDSON

That the entire newscast staff has had plastic surgery?

CARL STRAD

(chuckles)

Seriously though, it's odd that every single weather forecast other than ENA's predicted sun today.

ROBERT HUDSON

Yeah, I wondered about that on the way here. I bet John was having a hangover after a party and mixed up today's forecast with tomorrow's or something. We'll have to ask him about it when we're having lunch.

INT - CAFETERIA - MORNING

JOHN KEMPFER

I'm telling you it was a set-up! Everyone's been nagging about it all day. You know, I've seen people in suits around in the weather offices.

CARL STRAD

John, if you haven't noticed, around here everyone's wearing a suit.

JOHN KEMPFER

These were different. And it wasn't just their suits, it was the way they... were, the way they acted. I've only seen them here around closing time, and no one works at night in the weather offices. Just the climate computer running calculations - that's all.

CARL STRAD

So, you think they were hired goons from a rivaling news service there to sabotage your precious weather forecasts?

JOHN KEMPFER

(sarcastic) Yeah Rob, that's exactly what I think. <sighs. Serious now, pondering> I don't know, they could be just suits, higher-ups on an inspection. Or they could be... something else.

CARL STRAD

So... how did the old bossy boss take it when he woke up this morning?

JOHN KEMPFER

James? You know, he wasn't too harsh on me. Just said that these things happen and that I shouldn't worry about it. He seemed rather thoughtful, maybe he had other things to worry about. At least I didn't predict sun and we had rain. I think that would have been a lot worse.

END SCENE 6

EXT - CERNA II - TERRAN CAMP - MORNING

SCENE 7

Cerna II. Temporary terran camp on the way to the comm center. We're inside a tent where major Vince and her second-in-command, commander Russell are present. The wind is now extremely harsh, which is the reason that the army has stopped.

SFX: Howling wind. It sounds freezing cold.

MAJOR VINCE

(freezing)

Damn, it's cold.

COMMANDER RUSSELL

(freezing, says the following rhyme slowly and with difficulty, actor should make several pauses and/or lapses in rhythm as he sees fit to illustrate this)

Whether the weather is cold whether the weather is hot  
whatever the weather we'll weather the weather whether  
we like it or not. (a beat) Something my grandmother  
taught me. But you're supposed to say it really really  
fast.

MAJOR VINCE

(freezing)

Did she ever visit Cerna II, your grandmother?

COMMANDER RUSSELL

(a stifled attempt at a small laugh, ends up coughing instead)

I don't think so. But I'll be sure to ask next time I see her.

MAJOR VINCE

Still nothing on Lidar?

COMMANDER RUSSELL

No, we haven't been able to break through all the interference the storm is causing.

MAJOR VINCE

Good. Then they probably haven't either. We'll be concealed for now.

COMMANDER RUSSELL

We'll be concealed all right, but I don't know how much longer we can take this. Almost a week out here in the storm, while the Cernians could be sitting in barracks drinking hot... whatever it is they drink.

MAJOR VINCE

It's not as if we have any choice, and that's one hell of a moral boost. We're moving towards the comm center as fast as we can, but the storm will be here for at least a couple of days more, so at the moment, we don't happen to be moving at all. Rest assured, that's only temporary.

COMMANDER RUSSELL

And do you think everyone else knows that?

MAJOR VINCE

I know they know it deep down. We still have hope left, don't we?

SFX Artillery (as before) starts firing, can barely be heard through the storm outside. A beat as they listen.

COMMANDER RUSSELL

We have it for now. But it's urgent we get on our way soon, our soldiers' supply of hope will only last so long. Especially since we haven't gotten any reinforcements. I mean, all this time and not a word? From most of our soldier's perspective it sure seems as if Earth has aban-

MAJOR VINCE

(cutting him off)

Earth has not abandoned us, commander! There could be any number of reasons that they haven't sent more people. They could still be gathering resources and troops. The transport ships could have been intercepted. The Cernians could be sending them fake signals. Anything!

COMMANDER RUSSELL

The point is, major, while those are clearly possibilities, do you think the bulk of soldiers, who have been here for fifty-two days without as much as a whisper from earth, really believe in any of them? More importantly, do you?

SFX: FADE OUT - Wind Rises...

END SCENE 7

INT - ENA STUDIOS - NEWS BROADCAST - EVENING

SCENE 8

ENA STUDIOS - NEWS BROADCAST

FADE IN

CARL STRAD

...and that concludes the economy news. Now, Robert Hudson has another piece for us, straight from the front line on Cerna two.

ROBERT HUDSON

That's right, Carl. Get ready for these captivating scenes portraying the life of our soldiers on Cerna two.

MUSIC A short intro tune.

ENA ANNOUNCER VOICE

(upbeat - enthusiastic)

ENA presents: Life on Cerna II. Brought to you like this, in a balanced and objective way so that you can decide. (a beat) Cerna two, a place where many battles have been fought by our courageous expedition. But is it really just all mud and muck? Is it really a place where the only task our heroes rightfully have is to kill Cernian scum and face whatever horrors may come? Major Vince of the 1st army doesn't think so.

MAJOR VINCE

(pleasant)

Life here in the camp isn't so bad. I think a lot of folks back home have a slightly... exaggerated idea of how things are for us soldiers around here. We have almost all the luxuries we could need, and I don't think anyone's complaining about being treated bad by Earth or the army.

ENA ANNOUNCER VOICE

But don't take the major's word for it! Listen to what some regular, ordinary soldiers have to say.

NB: the two soldiers below are not standing next to each other when speaking, rather they have been interviewed at different times, and their comments are inter cut with each other.

INTERVIEWING SOLDIER

So... for the folks back home, how do you feel like you've been treated by the army and Earth?

SOLDIER #1

We've got anything you could wish for: hot meals, water, nice warm tents...

SFX We hear an ongoing soccer game in the background, a ball is passed around, only a dozen people playing or so.

SOLDIER #2

(out of breath, has just come from a soccer game)

Sure, we have uh, computers, movies, board games...

SOLDIER #1

If we're not sleeping or relaxing in the tent, we play some soccer, or someone arranges a card tournament.

SFX The soccer game henceforth continues.

SOLDIER #2  
(still a bit out of breath, but not as much)  
Card tournaments, that's right! And sometimes we play soccer, as you can see here behind me... or even table tennis.

SFX At some point during the time the question is asked, a referee blows a whistle.

INTERVIEWING SOLDIER  
And how do you feel about going into battle?

SOLDIER #2  
I'm sorry, could you repeat that?

INTERVIEWING SOLDIER  
Going into battle, how do you feel about it?

SOLDIER #2  
Oh, I'm fine with it, you know. I'm just doing my job, serving Earth. <short beat> Best job there is.

ENA ANNOUNCER VOICE  
We'll let major Vince have the final comment, regarding the question of how long there will be a presence on Cerna II.

MAJOR VINCE  
(determined)  
You know, I can understand that a lot of people are wondering about that. But as long as there are Cernians here, attacking us and fighting our attempts at diplomacy, never open to finding a peaceful solution... (a beat) Our presence here is extremely important, and we're constantly making progress. As long as they're here... we'll be here. It's as simple as that.

ENA ANNOUNCER VOICE  
In the words of the charming major Vince herself: progress is constantly being made. And it is with those words that we now conclude this fascinating insight into the lives of our vigilant and brave soldiers on Cerna II. Always in good morale, always strong in their hearts and minds, always ready to face any dangers that may come.

END SCENE 8



INT - ENA CAFETERIA - DAY

SCENE 9

ENA Cafeteria

JOHN KEMPFER

So... what do you guys think about the weather today?

ROBERT HUDSON

The weather? Well, it's pretty nice, maybe a bit foggy...

JOHN KEMPFER

Yes! Yes, exactly! It's foggy. And do you know what the computer said yesterday? (a short beat) I'll tell you: it didn't say anything about any damn fog!

CARL STRAD

Well, at least it wasn't as bad as last week... I mean, a little fog more or less, John... I don't think anyone noticed.

JOHN KEMPFER

Last week was a disaster. Did you see the ads UNN has put up? (changes his voice slightly when quoting ad) 'Weather reports with guaranteed water proof accuracy' This time they were more careful. I'm telling you, that mainframe is the most powerful climate computer in all Europe. These things shouldn't happen. Theoretically I should be able to predict the humidity in my own back yard with that thing.

ROBERT HUDSON

Wait-wait-wait, you saw those people again? Those... suits?

JOHN KEMPFER

They're only there after closing time, and now I know they're messing with the computers. They're waiting until I leave before they get to work. <short beat> Guys, I have to get in there at night.

ROBERT HUDSON

What if you talk to James? I'm sure he doesn't like people snooping around either.

JOHN KEMPFER

I tried that yesterday. Let's just say it didn't work.

CARL STRAD

Can't you just stay behind after work and see what happens?

JOHN KEMPFER

They'd suspect something when they notice I don't log out with my card. I have to get to the bottom of this. I can't work under these circumstances, it's exhausting my nerves.

ROBERT HUDSON

What are you getting at, John? You want to break into the ENA building after dark? You want to try to bypass what is probably the world's most advanced alarm system? You want to climb over electric fences, get past guard dogs and security cameras, not to mention night watchmen?

JOHN KEMPFER

Exactly. And YOU two are going to help me.

CARL STRAD

And why, EXACTLY, would we want to do a stupid thing like that?

JOHN KEMPFER

Because when all of this is over, we'll have one hell of a news story on our hands, and if James Spencer had anything to do with it, he's fired, and everyone will probably be taking one big step up on his respective career ladder.

END SCENE 9

SCENE 10

EXT - CERNA II -

Cerna II. The storm is gone, but the breeze is still there. We're near the comm center, in a meadow-like field.

SFX We hear the faint sound of automatic gun fire, from several sources. As we slowly come closer, shouts, orders and screams of pain blend in. While 'zooming in' on the action, we hear the following exchange:

SOLDIER #1 (O.S.)

It's a freakin' ambush! They knew where we were all the time.

PRIVATE FERRIS (O.S.)  
You shut up and concentrate, soldier!

SFX Finally, we're in the middle of the action, and the chaos of battle is everywhere.

COMMANDER RUSSELL  
(trying to be heard over the noise of battle)  
We're taking heavy fire! Major, what are our orders?

MAJOR VINCE  
Continue! Continue, dammit!

SFX The last word is partially obscured by the sound of an exploding grenade. Several people run past her.

MAJOR VINCE (CONT'D)  
We're almost there!

SFX two blips

MAJOR VINCE (CONT'D)  
A hundred and twenty meters, come on people! Don't look back!

SFX A big object loudly hits the ground near VINCE

MAJOR VINCE (CONT'D)  
Oh, crap!

SFX She starts running too. We only hear enemy fire now.

FADE OUT

END SCENE 10

SCENE 11

EXT - OUTSIDE ENA BUILDING - NIGHT

SFX Crickets are heard. The wind blows through the treetops.

ROBERT HUDSON

It's three o' clock already. Shouldn't we have come here a bit earlier?

JOHN KEMPFER

No, every thing's been thought out to the last detail. I've been planning this all yesterday night.

CARL STRAD

I hope that was a joke.

JOHN KEMPFER

(laughs, not entirely convincing)  
Of course it was, Carl.

SFX: A blueprint is rolled out on the grass.)

JOHN KEMPFER (CONT'D)

Now. We need to get over this fence here...

CARL STRAD

You mean, over there. Behind us.

JOHN KEMPFER

That's right. And then we need to get up on the roof. From here, we can walk to the exact right window and get in. Oh, and before I forget, you two will also need one of these. Keep them in your pocket, they'll make you look like jelly on the cameras. You might want to see a doctor later in the week, though. There's a small chance you get cancer after a couple of hour's use. Nothing that can't be fixed, obviously.

CARL STRAD

Oh, that's okay John. I was going to go see a doctor when this was over anyway. To have him check if I'm insane!

ROBERT HUDSON

This window... where does it lead into?

JOHN KEMPFER

It's a box-room on the other side of the A-building.

ROBERT HUDSON

A box-room?

JOHN KEMPFFER

Sure. They keep the brooms there. But the reason we're using it is because they forgot to connect alarm sensors to the window.

CARL STRAD

How come you're so familiar with- wait... I don't wanna know. But if the box-room's on the other side of the A-building, why are we standing around on this side of the C-building?

JOHN KEMPFFER

I told you, I've planned this to the last detail. Now, if you'll keep any further questions to yourselves for the moment, I don't want us to fall behind schedule.

SFX A bag's zipper is opened, an object taken out.

ROBERT HUDSON

What the hell is that?

CARL STRAD

I couldn't agree more.

JOHN KEMPFFER

It's a little something that will come in handy getting over the fence here.

CARL STRAD

Oh, so at least now we know we're not going to be digging a tunnel. Where did you get that thing anyway?

SFX There are clicking sounds as metallic bars are connected.

JOHN KEMPFFER

Ordered it off the Internet. Prime stuff from the wild wild East. In fact, as you can see here, I ordered a whole bagful of stuff from the same place. Brought a camera too.

SFX: John walks up to the fence, the others follow.

JOHN KEMPFFER (CONT'D)

Now, I'm going to position one of these bars right against the fence here...

SFX: The electric fence buzzes as the bar is leaned against it

JOHN KEMPFFER (CONT'D)  
And the other one no more than one meter away, here...

SFX: The electric fence buzzes once more

JOHN KEMPFFER (CONT'D)  
Right, it's all set. We can start climbing. Just keep your hands somewhere in between the bars, or you're toast. (short beat) As I can plainly see the reluctance in your eyes, I'll demonstrate the safety by going first. Right, I'll just start climbing then.

SFX The bag's zipper is closed

CARL STRAD  
Don't forget the bag.

SFX The bag is thrown to JOHN, who grabs it.

JOHN KEMPFFER  
Right, thanks.

SFX: The bag is thrown over the fence and lands on the other side.

JOHN KEMPFFER (CONT'D)  
Now I have to get over, if only to get that expensive equipment back.

SFX Sounds as John first hits the fence with his hand to test it.  
Then one more time.

JOHN KEMPFFER (CONT'D)  
(relieved)  
Whew.

SFX He starts climbing. When at the top, he jumps down on the other side.

ROBERT HUDSON  
Are you okay, John?

JOHN KEMPFFER  
Yeah. Now hurry up before the dogs get here.

SFX Robert and Carl climb the fence as well, and jump down on the other side. We hear a dog snarl and start running towards them.

CARL STRAD  
(desperate)  
Now what?!

JOHN KEMPFER  
Now... we'll use this.

SFX A grappling hook is fired and catches on the roof.

CARL STRAD  
You've got to be kidding me. A grappling hook!?

SFX The rope is retracted and John pulls himself up. He heaves himself up on the roof, and throws down the grappler. The dog gets closer.

JOHN KEMPFER  
Hurry!

SFX The rope is retracted and Robert pulls himself up, he throws the grappler down again.

CARL STRAD  
Remind me of why I tagged along on this again?

SFX The dog is now barking loudly. Carl triggers the retracting of the rope, but not before the dog gets a hold of his foot.

CARL STRAD (CONT'D)  
Get off me!

SFX We hear the dog receive a kick, followed by a whimper and more barking. Carl gets up on the roof.

JOHN KEMPFER  
Let's get going.

SFX They carefully start running on the roof.

ROBERT HUDSON  
(to Carl)  
You... KICKED the dog?

CARL STRAD  
It tried to attack me! Did you SEE those fangs?

ROBERT HUDSON  
You could have jumped.

CARL STRAD  
IT was jumping!

SFX: running slows to a stop

JOHN KEMPFFER  
The window is right here.

CARL STRAD  
How do we...

SFX The window is smashed into pieces by John.

CARL STRAD (CONT'D)  
Right.

END SCENE 11

SCENE 12

SFX They heave themselves into the room. Some steps are taken over the broken glass. John opens the box-room door out to the corridor.

JOHN KEMPFFER  
(whispering)  
The climate computer is right down this hallway.

SFX They walk down the hallway.

ROBERT HUDSON  
(whispering)  
Looks like no one's here.

SFX An electronic card is put into a checker, sound as it's verified. John opens the door.

JOHN KEMPFFER  
(not needing to whisper)  
Heh. Not a soul.

SFX Click as a lamp button is pushed and fluorescent lamps are turned on.

JOHN KEMPFFER (CONT'D)  
No, turn the lamps back off. Someone might see notice them if they're on.



SFX Click as the lamps are turned back off. Steps as they now are all gathered around the computer screen.

JOHN KEMPFFER (CONT'D)  
Someone's been here messing with the computer, a program is running.

SFX: Four clicks following each other

JOHN KEMPFFER (CONT'D)  
It's using almost a third of the available processing power. Hey, what's THIS?

SFX A few keys are pressed on the keyboard. A mouse click.

ROBERT HUDSON  
(confused)  
Character models?

SFX Two clicks.

CARL STRAD  
Click that one.

SFX Click.

CARL STRAD (CONT'D)  
I recognize that. It's an FN-77... play sound file.

SFX A click, followed by the looped sound of an automatic rifle firing, a sound that has been used in previous newscasts. After a few second, another click stops the sound.

ROBERT HUDSON  
Get back to the character models.

SFX Two clicks.

CARL STRAD  
Browse down... these are ranks! Check the one with the highest. Major...

SFX A click.

ROBERT HUDSON  
(also JOHN )  
That's Major Vince!

CARL STRAD  
No, that's a computer generated model of Serena Vince.

JOHN KEMPFER  
This is outrageous! It's a climate computer for Christ's sake! MY climate computer! The most powerful computer in Europe!

CARL STRAD  
I'm having a horrifying suspicion, check 'environments'.

SFX A click.

CARL STRAD (CONT'D)  
Cerna two. I knew it. <beat> Don't you see? The newscasts... they have been simulated! Look here...

SFX Three clicks.

CARL STRAD (CONT'D)  
They've been creating false reports from Cerna two for more than a month! Look, this is the first one.

SFX A click.

MAJOR VINCE (FILTERED)  
(happy.)  
Hello! I'm major Vince, for another report from Cerna 2.

SFX Four clicks, the playback stops after the first.

JOHN KEMPFER  
Look, I just added a Cernian standing behind her. They could have had the Cernians destroy the entire army camp if they wanted! Which is probably what really happened anyway...

SFX A few clicks with a mouse, a key or two pressed to indicate someone working at a computer.

CARL STRAD  
Do what you want, John, just remember: don't change anything.

ROBERT HUDSON  
It's almost six thirty. Haven't we filmed enough evidence already? I mean, Morning News is on in an hour, I have to stay updated.

JOHN KEMPFER

I'm still finding new stuff on this computer. They've been draining the processor to create the CGI.

CARL

Not create John, render. They probably want to store it to another server, and left a link open so that the completed sequence can close and upload itself. They also had to make some modifications so that you wouldn't notice anything. Of course, they didn't expect the processing drain to affect the weather predictions so profoundly.

JOHN

But why here?

SFX A few more clicks are heard.

CARL

You said it yourself: this is the most powerful computer in Europe. Rendering computer-generated images as advanced as those we've seen takes a lot of power.

ROBERT

All right, we have to leave now. There will be people in this building soon.

CARL

I agree. We should get going.

JOHN

Hey, what's this?

(reading)

Satellite uplink...

SFX A click, followed by another click.

JOHN

(reading)

FTL comm?

SFX: Click.

SFX - the FTL "radio" is heavily distorted

COMMANDER RUSSELL

...repeat: This is commander Russell of the 1<sup>st</sup> army on Cerna II calling Earth. Do you read?

(message repeats)

ROBERT  
Answer it!

SFX A click.

JOHN  
Hello! Uh, my name is John Kempfer. I read you.

COMMANDER RUSSELL  
Oh my god! Wait there a second, John.  
We'll be right back.

(static for a few seconds, then:)

MAJOR VINCE  
This is major Vince, who am I speaking to?

JOHN  
My name is John Kempfer, I am a journalist with ENA. I found this link by accident, we thought you were... we didn't know what had happened to you.

MAJOR VINCE  
Why the hell didn't you send reinforcements when contact was lost?

JOHN  
We uh... the thing is... hold on.

ROBERT  
We have to tell her.

CARL  
(clears his throat)  
Hello major, my name is Carl Strad, also an ENA reporter. I'm very sorry to tell you this, but ever since contact was lost we have had reports allegedly from Cerna II saying that you were all fine and healthy.

MAJOR VINCE  
What?!

CARL  
It has now become obvious that those reports were in fact fake computer generated imagery. What I don't understand

is, if you're alive, why did they do it? What is your position?

MAJOR VINCE

Our position? Our position!? Mr. Strad, I have a force of less than a hundred soldiers left here. We just retook the comm center that was raised when we first came, but there is a small army of Cernians gathering outside, preparing to force their way in. We've been on the run for so long, we can't take this much longer. You have to send reinforcements. We're getting out now, or there won't be anything left of us when you arrive.

CARL

You don't understand. The government isn't interested in sending reinforcements. They will find an excuse and people will forget about this... about you.

<A beat as major Vince lets this sink in.>

MAJOR VINCE

In that case, I will send you some real footage. Let several independent experts compare it with the fake, they will surely find the flaws.

COMMANDER RUSSELL

(heard in the background, shouting)  
Major, we have to leave now! They are storming the building! We'll set the explosives and leave! Come on!

MAJOR VINCE

No. We'll stay here and defend this room.  
(to the radio)  
I'm sending you the recordings now.

JOHN

Are we receiving?

CARL

Yeah, but it's going way too slow.

JOHN

You can't stay there, major! Go, we'll find some other way.

MAJOR VINCE

No. If I send you this, you can get the truth out there, without a doubt. You can make sure our sacrifice was at least a little bit less in vain.

SFX An explosion in a room next to the one major Vince is in makes a wall crumble. We hear the loud thumping sound of the big, heavy object Vince saw before. It's closing, although not very fast. Automatic gunfire is heard, someone gets hit.

JOHN  
Have we got it?

CARL  
Almost.

MAJOR VINCE  
I have to go now. They know we're in this room.

SFX The sound of gunfire fills the bandwidth.

PRIVATE FERRIS  
Grenades!

SFX The clunking sound of a couple of grenades being thrown into the room.

CARL  
Got it. It's all on this disc.

SFX As the grenades explode, the connection is severed.

<A beat as they are all silent.>

END SCENE 12

SCENE 13

SFX A door is kicked in. Steps.

ROBERT  
(whispering)  
Get down, someone's coming.

JOHN  
Maybe it's the police.

MARK  
(into a radio)  
I have them. All units to the A-building, second floor.

SFX A gunshot.

CARL

I don't think police officers are allowed to do that without a warning.

SFX A pistol is loaded.

ROBERT

John, why did you bring that? Put it down. We're not going to shoot anyone.

JOHN

That was no police officer. We have to get down to the studio in time for the seven thirty broadcast. It's our only chance to get this out before the building is taken over by the government. Lets go!

SFX: The three start running, open another door and flee through a corridor.

ROBERT

What - you mean like, hijack the broadcast?

JOHN

That's exactly what I mean.

FADE OUT

END SCENE 13

SCENE 14:

Minutes before seven thirty, in the living room of an ordinary family's house.

ANDERS

(calling his wife in the other room)  
Are you gonna watch the news, hon?

SFX Steps as she enters the room and sits down in a sofa.

JULY

Thank you for reminding me, dear. I was just going to go to the library.

SFX The TV is turned on to a channel with a commercial, then switched to ENA.

We hear the studio crew and John, Robert and Carl shouting and struggling. Things are being thrown. All this coming from the TV.

JULY

Oh, my.

ROBERT

(trying to make himself heard)

People, listen! The building is being stormed by parapolice. We have a crucial message regarding the war on Cerna II that has to be put forward. You have to let us borrow the cameras for a while.

JAMES SPENCER

I won't let you terrorize the crew. Stop what you're doing or I'll lock out the connection.

JOHN

I wouldn't do that if I were you.

SFX The crowd grows suddenly quiet, then starts up again.

ROBERT

John, put that down! We agreed not to...

JOHN

(cutting him off)

They'll be here any minute, Rob. We have to do this now, or it will never happen.

(to James, trying to stay calm)

Now, James. Step away from the control board and let us do what we want.

CARL

John...!

JAMES

This is an act of terrorism! Never! I won't let you...

SFX A gunshot stops James in mid-sentence, and the crowd is instantly quiet. We hear the thud when James' body hits the floor.

JULY

Oh my god! Look what he did to that man!

JOHN



(swallows)

Now. You will give us control and nothing bad will happen.

SFX John walks a few steps to sit on a chair in front of a camera.

JOHN

Start rolling. Are we rolling? Good.

(clears his throat)

The war on Cerna II has been a lie. I will hereby present evidence showing that Major Vince and 1<sup>st</sup> army in fact has been taking severe losses, and final contact was lost earlier this morning. Roll the footage.

MAJOR VINCE

(on video)

This is major Vince, February 27th. Our comm center has been captured in an attack by the Cernians, and a large portion of our force has been killed. We are now on the run, trying to get as far away from enemy forces as possible. We are in no condition to fight in an open confrontation. My goal must now be to keep this group together at all costs, and wait until Earth sends reinforcements.

JOHN

The reports you have seen haven't consisted of actual interviews or appearances of people on Cerna two. Ever since the real recording of the report Major Vince just gave, everything has been computer-generated. All the victories, all the happiness, everything has been fake.  
(a beat)

As we speak, this building is being stormed by government forces. If they cut this transmission, you know why. It's imperative that...

SFX (making John stop mid-sentence)

Hard, regular thumps against a metal door.

ROBERT

They're coming! They're trying to force the door!

JOHN

This is John Kempfer, calling out to everyone willing to believe the truth.

SFX: The door is forced, several people storm into the room

TERRY

Everyone freeze! Get down on the floor! Get down on the floor now!

MARK

Step away from the camera! Step away from the camera now!

JOHN

Don't be spoon-fed by what they give you! Question it! The war is a lie!

SFX: he's forcibly pulled off the chair, which falls over

JOHN (cont.)

You have to believe me! You have to-

SFX The connection is severed. Noise, followed by a constant one-tone sound. The TV is turned off (sound stops).

<A beat>

Steps as July gets up and walks out of the room. She opens the front door.

ANDERS

Get some pie on the way back, will you hon?

SFX The door is slammed shut.

THE END